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Prisoners Deal One Hitch Away

By James B. Donovan

Miami Herald Staff Writer, Latin America Editor

Behind the scenes, the United States has agreed to meet all of Fidel Castro's demands — except one — for release of the more than 100 Bay of Pigs invasion prisoners.

Authoritative sources in Washington said today that Attorney General Robert Kennedy has given approval to complete the negotiations in the name of the Cuban Families Committee for the release of the prisoners.

On Castro's terms, it was reported that the United States would insist that the Cuban premier waive the extradition of the invasion brigade, as a hostage to guarantee ransom delivery and insurance against any aggression from this country.

The holding of Artime was one of the late demands imposed by Castro in the prolonged negotiations.

Reportedly, Castro has demanded drugs, medicines, medical supplies and a year's supply of blood plasma. The value of the exchange items, according to Castro's terms, would have to equal the 62 million dollars Cuba demanded earlier as a cash ransom.

New York attorney James B. Donovan, who has ostensibly represented the Families Committee in the negotiations, refused to discuss current developments by telephone with The Miami News today.

Donovan, in his unsuccessful U. S. Senate election bid in New York, continued last week to express optimism about the prisoner negotiations. In one speech he also was quoted as saying that Americans would have to learn that Castro represented "certain principles" in Latin America.

It was said in Washington that Donovan planned to return to Havana soon for "fruitful conclusions" to the negotiations.

Officially, the U. S. government has stated that it is not directly involved in the negotiations but has expressed "sympathy" and support for the Families Committee efforts.

For weeks there has been widespread speculation that U. S. officials were supporting the work of Donovan and the Families Committee with more than sympathy.

Last month, when Donovan went to Havana for the self-announced purpose of winding up the negotiations, detailed plans for airlifting the prisoners from Havana to Miami by chartered Pan American jetliners were prepared under U. S. supervision.

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